

DRAFT
Integrated Solid Waste Planning Meeting
November 6, 2002

Attendance List

J. Reitsma, K. Beaver, T. Armstrong, L. Hellested, L. Grandchamp, B. Shiller, E. Marks, B. Mendoza, T. Bisson, J. Keller, S. Dormody, J. Pereira, M. Mesolella, G. DiCenso, A. Curmally, P. Beaudette, T. Gray and T. Getz

The Director started the meeting thanking the group for coming to the meeting and went over some of his reasons for emphasizing the need for an integrated approach to solid waste management in the State. He referenced a report titled "Solid Waste Planning" that he had helped develop for the Environmental Council of RI. The plan was written in 1986 and needed revision. He wanted the group to think about the larger solid waste issues and prioritize efforts using the waste hierarchy, i.e., source reduction, reuse, recycling and finally disposal. The Director also explained that there have been efforts undertaken to consolidate the various solid waste programs, including the recycling programs, into the Office of Waste Management but the effectiveness of that consolidation has been limited by resources constraints.

Terry Gray mentioned that DEM was interested evaluating all the existing program elements, especially recycling. He said there are little resources in the Bureau to direct to a recycling program. The director said the Office of Waste management needs to be responsible for all of DEM's efforts in solid waste and perhaps resources could come from other areas.

Terry raised the following points as examples of why now is an opportune time to consider this topic:

- Phase V is the last phase of the landfill that has been approved by the host community agreement. The state will need to have started the siting process for a new site for solid waste disposal in about five years.
- Based on NEWMOA statistics, Rhode Island has the highest waste generation rate in New England.
- The closure of NEED and the Global facility has an impact on the industry, particularly with respect to construction and demolition material. Impacts on other facilities must be evaluated and compliance actions reviewed to minimize the potential for future problems similar to those found at these sites.
- DEM is starting to focus on toxics in solid waste, including life cycle management of products containing mercury and supporting industry efforts for product stewardship on certain product categories, such as electronics.

With respect to solid waste, Terry mentioned the following challenges:

- The state has the infrastructure in place and a program for municipal recycling. DEM has not been able to make inroads in commercial recycling because of resource constraints.
- Out of state waste is still an issue, particularly with respect to a "loophole" in the system that allows out-of-state construction and demolition debris to be processed and trans-shipped to Central Landfill as alternative daily cover material.

- We need to do more in removing toxics i.e., pressure treated wood and electronics from the waste stream and look for ways to enhance product stewardship.
- DEM needs to be vigilant on its compliance and enforcement efforts at existing facilities.
- Staffing reductions have pushed DEM away from source reduction and prioritized our efforts into proper disposal.

Terry mentioned three options that could be used to move this process forward:

1. Make elements of the Integrated Solid Waste Plan part of the Bureau's work plan. Set goals, priorities and staff responsibilities for working on this issue.
2. Continue with this process, break up into working groups and require each working group to develop a part of the plan.
3. Revise the Rhode Island Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (State Guide Plan Element 171). Work with the RI Resource Recovery Corporation on this issue.

The Director thought that the meeting handout that was distributed should be revised and tasks or issues should be organized based on the solid waste hierarchy. This would help to set priorities of our limited resources.

He raised a number of other issues:

- Waste reduction should be a high priority in the plan
- We should evaluate our approach to the regulation of solid waste to ensure we are encouraging the proper disposal of waste.
- We should seek to expand pilot efforts on promoting recycling at apartment buildings.
- We should look at commercial efforts, such as those developed by Clean Scape, and look for opportunities to support them and broaden implementation.
- We should look at methodologies to accurately measure recycling rates.
- We should review the municipal recycling efforts of other states and compare it to RI's system.
- We should focus additional efforts on school and state agency recycling.
- We should discuss what roles are best for DEM and RIRRC with respect to the various aspects of recycling
- He challenged the environmental community to develop the first draft of the plan. This plan should suggest goals for the legislature, DEM, municipalities and the RIRRC.
- Adequate programs for litter control and funding for litter pick-ups remains an issue and the legislature should be encouraged to revisit this issue.

Eugenia Marks thought that public education was a key element of the plan. Municipal recycling rates vary across the state and we should determine why some programs are more successful than others. She also thought we should simplify how plastics designated 1 or 2 should be recycled. She also wanted to see how state institutions and agencies are involved in recycling. In addition the state should be encouraged to buy products with recycled content.

Kendra Beaver wanted to know when Phase V would be needed. (Phase IV would be filled by 2004) She also wanted us to study how construction and demolition (C&D) waste is used at the landfill. The director thought we should first determine how much cover material is required by the landfill and then

determine if local sources could supply this demand. Out of state C&D should only be used if there is a shortfall of material generated in state. Kendra suggested that DEM should consider changing its regulations to require the use of alternative cover materials generated in state before out of state waste is used for this purpose.

Barry Shiller said it was important for municipalities to be told about the projected closing date of the Central Landfill. Siting is a huge issue and municipalities might work harder in their recycling efforts if they know it would have an impact on siting a new landfill.

Eugenia wanted to know if DEM required recycling in apartment buildings. Mike Mesolella, from RIRRC, explained that they were working on pilot programs in this area but there is still much work to be done.

Geoff DiCenso said he was the recycling coordinator for Cumberland, Smithfield, North Smithfield and Burrillville. It was his view that communities should have recycling coordinators. The regional approach was a pilot program to see if one person could provide the necessary recycling coordination services for up to four towns. He said the program has enjoyed tremendous success due to the visibility of a coordinator within the town and the relationships he has built with public works directors, town managers/administrators, and waste hauling contractors. Because of his efforts, he was able to begin school recycling and mercury and computer cartridges collection programs. Additionally, he has held region wide computer and propane tank recycling drives which experienced exceptional turnout.

Mike Mesolella from the RIRRC is their educational coordinator and made the following points:

- The RIRRC is piloting a recycling program in Providence with twenty-one schools. He is working with the Blackstone Valley ARC to see if he can get more schools on-line.
- The last seven communities have started the maximum recycling program.
- The RIRRC is starting a computer satellite collection program.
- The Eco Depot Program has been a success and has expanded beyond the efforts when DEM had the program.
- The DCYF and Department of Business Regulation have initiated recycling programs and he is working with URI to start theirs.
- The RIRRC has three persons working in this effort.

The Director acknowledged that the RIRRC is doing a great job in recycling and wanted to lend his support to their recycling efforts. He indicated that if RIRRC needed additional funding for recycling coordinator grants, that DEM would be supportive of this effort. He thought that the Department of Administration should be more involved in this effort and should provide incentives or requirements for state agencies to participate in recycling. RIRRC indicated that they would provide the bins and collection totes for the state facilities. RIRRC indicated the municipalities recycled 12 –13 % of material by weight. Some attendees thought this percent should be higher. Another commenter encourages the RIRRC to promote commercial and multi-unit recycling.

Barry Schiller said we need to think about fees or market based incentives to encourage recycling. Pay as you throw is an effective program, but politicians are concerned because waste disposal services are already paid for through taxes. Citizens often look at this program negatively because they feel they

have to pay for the service twice, once through taxes and the second time when they dispose their waste. Paul Beaudette remarked if citizens think programs that reduce waste are a problem, things will only get worse when Central Landfill closes. The municipalities need to address the issue of source reduction or else face the issue of siting a landfill sooner rather than later.

One participant indicated that there are often impediments in state purchasing regulations to require state agencies to choose the least expensive item. Recycled goods often cost more. Although this was the case at one time, the state does allow agencies to purchase items with recycled content even if they cost more.

Eugenia Marks requested that we distribute reports on RIRRC's source reduction efforts and the State Guide Plan.

The meeting was adjourned and the date for the next meeting was tentatively set for December 5th at 10AM. (This date was later changed to December 13th at 10 in Room 450 A)